

Governor's Representatives on Colorado River Operations

February 9, 2005

The Honorable Jon Kyl
United States Senate
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0304

The Honorable John McCain
United States Senate
241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0303

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0505

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0504

The Honorable Wayne Allard
United States Senate
525 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0605

The Honorable Ken Salazar
United States Senate
B40A Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0606

The Honorable John Ensign
United States Senate
364 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-2804

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-2803

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
United States Senate
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3102

The Honorable Pete Domenici
United States Senate
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3101

The Honorable Robert Bennett
United States Senate
431 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-4403

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
United States Senate
104 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-4402

The Honorable Michael Enzi
United States Senate
379A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-5004

The Honorable Craig Thomas
United States Senate
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-5003

Dear Senators:

Urgent Request for FY 2006 Funding for Lower Colorado River Regulatory Storage:
Drop 2 Regulatory Storage -- \$30 million; Laguna Dam Regulatory Storage -- \$7.6 million

As the governors' representatives of the seven Colorado River Basin states for Colorado River operations, we request that you support the appropriation of adequate monies in FY 2006 for (1) advancement of new off-stream regulatory storage near the All-American Canal, and (2) work related to removal of sediment from the Colorado River behind Laguna Dam to increase its regulatory storage capability, in order to save up to 200,000 acre-feet of water annually. Timely action is critical as we have experienced five years of drought in the Colorado River Basin and lack of sufficient regulatory storage below Hoover Dam is resulting in the loss of storage for both Lake Powell and Lake

Mead. Storage of water at Lake Powell and Lake Mead has diminished by 24 million acre-feet, nearly 50 percent of their capacity.

Water released from Hoover Dam takes five days to travel the 303 miles to Imperial Dam, at which point on the River the diversions are the greatest and the ability to regulate flows is the least. A map showing the location of these facilities is enclosed. Unanticipated changes in weather conditions, water use orders, and flow into the River can significantly affect the Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) ability to deliver the water ordered by Arizona and California entities, and regulate the River. The limited storage capacity available downstream of Lake Havasu is located principally in Senator Wash Reservoir, operated by Reclamation. This reservoir has a usable storage capacity of over 12,000 acre-feet when full at elevation 251 feet.

Senator Wash Reservoir temporarily holds water that arrives at Imperial Dam in excess of the amount scheduled to be delivered from Imperial Dam. This water is pumped into the reservoir and is released as needed to meet downstream demands. Currently, Senator Wash Reservoir is operated between elevations 210 feet and 240 feet. Operation restrictions put in place since 1992 due to dam safety concerns prevent raising the reservoir's water surface elevation above 240 feet. These reservoir operating restrictions, which prevent the use of nearly 5,000 acre-feet of storage space, make it much more difficult to regulate the flow of water arriving at Imperial Dam. Considering the decline in storage in Lake Powell and Lake Mead over the last five years of drought, it is critically important that available Colorado River water be conserved and stored by the United States to efficiently manage this finite resource.

The efficiency of a water system is largely dependent upon the ability of the operators to manage water on a real-time basis. Additional regulating capacity is needed to optimize beneficial use of Colorado River water in the United States. From January 2000 through December 2003, the first four years of the current drought, Reclamation was unable to store over 722,000 acre-feet of water. Had this water been conserved, Lake Mead would be over 7 feet higher than it is today.

Reclamation is completing a multi-phased study quantifying the need and options for regulatory storage to improve Colorado River management downstream of Lake Mead. Reclamation has concluded that locating up to a 10,000 acre-foot capacity water management reservoir near the All-American Canal, near Drop 2 east of the Imperial Valley, would be of great benefit to the Colorado River Basin states. These benefits include conservation of reservoir system storage, improving river regulation and water delivery scheduling, providing opportunities for water conservation, storage and conjunctive use programs, and setting the stage for new cooperative water supply and water quality management endeavors with Mexico.

Reclamation funding of \$30 million is needed in FY 2006 in order to complete environmental compliance and design and begin construction for this small water management reservoir near the All-American Canal. This effort would be accomplished through Reclamation's multi-pronged Colorado River Front Work and Levee System, Water and Energy Management and Development activity in the Lower Colorado Region.

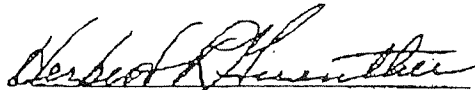
While activities on a reservoir near the All-American Canal proceed, there is an immediate need to restore the limited regulatory storage capacity. This can be partly accomplished by excavating sediments that have accumulated behind Laguna Dam since its completion in 1909. Reclamation funding of \$7.6 million is needed in FY 2006 for completing environmental compliance and procurement and beginning construction for this Yuma Area Projects, Facilities Maintenance and Rehabilitation activity, which would restore 1,100 acre-feet of storage behind Laguna Dam. Not only would this enhance the ability to regulate flows arriving at Imperial Dam, it would capture and re-regulate the water periodically released for the proper operation of Imperial Dam, benefiting both the Basin States and Mexico.

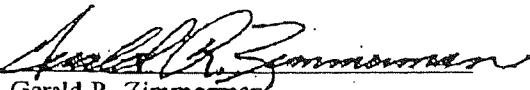
If the President's FY 2006 Budget does not provide this level of funding for these activities, the Bureau of Reclamation's budget should be increased to accommodate these activities. This funding for increased Lower Colorado River Regulatory Storage should not adversely affect funding for any of the Bureau of Reclamations

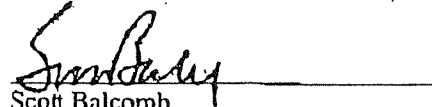
authorized projects or funding for Reclamation's water operations, environmental, endangered species recovery, and salinity control programs.

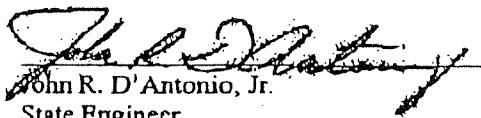
We trust that you will give serious consideration to our request. Please have your staff call on us for any additional information you may need.

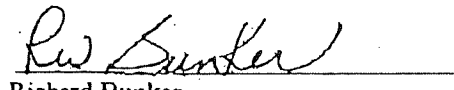
Sincerely,

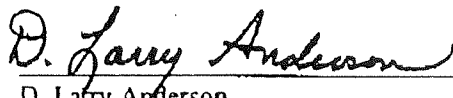

Herbert R. Guenther
Director
Arizona Department of Water Resources



Gerald R. Zimmerman
Executive Director
Colorado River Board of California


Scott Balcomb
Upper Colorado River Commissioner
State of Colorado

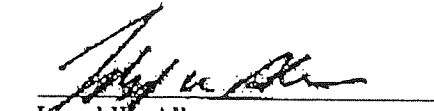

John R. D'Antonio, Jr.
State Engineer
State of New Mexico

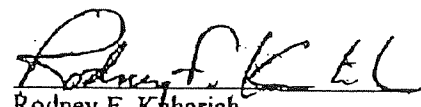

Richard Bunker
Chairman
Colorado River Commission of Nevada

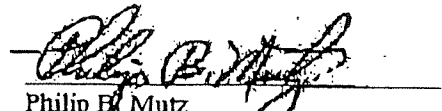

D. Larry Anderson
Director, Division of Water Resources
State of Utah

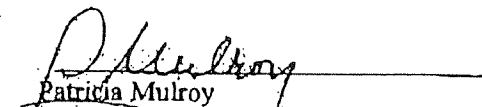

Patrick T. Tyrrell
State Engineer
State of Wyoming

Enclosure


Lloyd W. Allen
Chairman
Colorado River Board of California


Rodney F. Kharich
Director
Colorado Water Conservation Board


Philip B. Mutz
Upper Colorado River Commissioner
State of New Mexico


Patricia Mulroy
General Manager
Southern Nevada Water Authority